

The West Tennessee Star.

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TOLIVAN, TENNESSEE

IN THE TOWN OF VANITY.

All in the town of Vanity
I enter through the lusty fair,
And choose some fairings for my dear—
A tinkling jewel for her ear,
A ribbon for her golden hair.

And all this day, since morning dawned,
My dear haird had at yonder booth,
And hanged withal a row of beads,
About some dainty stuff to wear
That suits her beauty and her youth.

All in the town of Vanity
My love and I were both and bred;
Our childhood at the Fair was spent;
Ours for a school we were sent;
Within it all our prayers were said.

And there we early learnt to seek
Those fairings that for each were meet.
I bargained most for wealth and place,
My love for bonous, silk and lace—
Those trifling sweeties of the sweet.

But some day, now we're 'a' in love,
And to either each other seek
This dainty fairing for each of ours,
His bonous heaped up with daisies and flowers,
Some, 'tis said, to her and some to me.

For in this town of Vanity,
And in this Fair, the truth to tell,
All treasures quickly flit away,
And all our love is but a dream,
And not one flitting daisy will.

And of our nature now we love,
And over from ourselves have past,
We can not but be glad to see
I for my love, and she for me,
To wish some blessing that shall last.

We half turned the town to leave,
And pilgrims of the plains were seen,
Our faces toward the western sky,
E'en to those pleasant hills that lie
Along the banks of the great river.

But in this town of Vanity
I prize the lot no mortal know,
Least we should meet the grievous end
That out of our prayers was sent,
In Vanity long time ago.

And surely out of Vanity
My love and I to flee engage,
When she hath heard some word to wear,
And I gold treasure, at the Fair,
To serve us in our pilgrimage.

—May E. W. in *Harper's Bazar*.

GRAN'MA'S NEW HOUSE.

A Surprise Prepared For a Dear Old Mother.

The folks out here have had enough to do this summer watching and working over their crops of hay and barley and corn, praying for rain to fall and for rain to cease, carrying butter and eggs to market, and so forth. But they have done all this and more, and then when they have met at the store to talk over the matter of Timothy Bolton's new house. It is the first new house that has been built in Tamarack in fourteen years, and it is a serious matter, there has been, strapping boys here doing men's work, who never saw a yellow shingle before in their lives. They have been supping along that shingles were always of that dull, drab, weather color that they appear to be on the old houses. And they never saw a yellow shingle before in their lives. How could they know it when they had never seen more than four inches of one in their lives?

"What are they thin at one end for?" asked Deacon Bibb's one day.

"So, the water'll run off," replied one of the carpenters.

"Oh, yes," said the boy, and he does not know to this day why the carpenters all have shaved so loudly.

The way Tim came to build the new house was: His mother, Gran'ma Bolton, as all the folks call her, went back East last spring to visit around among her sisters and the few old friends that were still alive in Vermont—to see them all once more before they died, as she said. It was Tim's doing, Gran'ma didn't believe she could ever go to the world made up her mind to take such a long trip and be away from home a whole summer, but Tim is a go-ahead fellow and when he set his mind on it he'll fall it was pretty sure to come out that way. Tim had been to the city in good old times, and to New York once, and the world didn't seem so big to him as it did to Gran'ma, who had lived right here in the old house since long before Tim was born.

Well, Gran'ma got away early in April and in less than a week Tim and some carpenters out from the city and they began to tear the old house down and pile it in the pasture lot back of the barn. Tim, who is an old back, stowed the furniture away in the buggy-room, and he never over to Aunt Becky today to live till the work was done. Every day he was on hand doing more work than any two of the carpenters, for, said he:

"It's just like mother to come poking back here before the time's up and want to have everything ready so as to give her a genuine surprise."

"Tim's a good son," said all the folks.

"There ain't many a boy that'd skite around the world as he has and come back and stick to his ma and not marry," said old folks one evening, as a lot of the men were sitting on the big platform in front of the store.

"No. Look at Gus North," said Charley Gibson; "went off and left his ma and sister to look out for themselves and wrote up his sister that he was too busy to come to his ma's funeral."

"Yes," said Jim Mason, "and sent fifteen dollars to buy flowers with when flowers was as cheap as dirt and his sister was getting broad, and say nothing of black clothes."

"But Tim never got so high-toned he couldn't come back and keep the old farm up. Of course he likes to have things, nice, and that's all right. He can afford to have a new house and he ought to have it."

"And that big room with the what-d'ye-call-it—that window that bulges out—that's for Gran'ma Bolton, and it's the best room in the house by all odds."

They talked on and whittled the edge of the platform away evening after evening. Sometimes a discussion arose as to what particular idea Tim had in putting this or that hole in the side or that or that crook in the roof, and then they'd all shut their eyes and get up and kick out their legs and money over to ask Tim about it, for he was always to be found working at the house until dark.

By and by the house was closed in and all but one of the carpenters went away, and a wagonload of windows, with big panes of glass in them, only two panes to one sash, and after that some doors—one of them of real black walnut, with a silver-looking plate and "Mrs. Sarah Bolton" cut into it. And they put a big light in the middle of the door—a new kind of bell that rings by a crank instead of a knob and wire like Tom Judson's.

"Tim's just slinging on the style, ain't he?" said Zeb Watson.

"Yes, but he's doing it for his ma; he wouldn't put no bell on the door for himself," replied Job Harding.

After awhile wagon loads of furniture began to come—bedsteads with slats across them instead of ropes, washstands with cupboards in the bottom, chairs with little holes through the seats, and two lounges with arms only at one end of them.

"Where's the front-room set?" Tim asked of one of the drivers on a fancy painted wagon.

"We'll bring that out to-morrow," he replied.

The next day they brought some furniture that made the folks' eyes stand right out of their heads. A big oak bedstead with a headboard six feet tall and a lot of fancy carved things on it, with never a rope nor a slat in its name, but a springy sort of thing made of bright wire crisscrossed in and out for the real hair mattress to lean on. When Alcock Dempster lay down on it after he had helped set it up in the front room he bobbed up and down and said, "Gosh! and looked as if he would like to lie right there and teeter-taster the rest of his days. Then there was a washstand just like the bed, with a cupboard under it and a real marble top to it, and a big chair with the cushions made right into the back of it. "It seems as if it was sort of fit me better. I s'pose it was because I have sat in it so many years and rocked all my babies in it."

"Waal," said Jabez Duncan, "I s'pose that's about the most comfortable space room in this country."

"That's not a spare room," replied Tim; "that's mother's room. We're not going to have any company come to see us that deserves a better room than my mother's does."

"Gosh!" said Jabez. "So this is for your ma? Waal, Tim, you're a great blessing to your ma, that's all I've got to say."

"And you haven't writ a word about it to her?" asked Job Harding.

"No," said Tim; "I want it all to be a surprise to her."

"Waal, it will be a surprise, sure enough. I s'pose, but I'd like to see her eyes when she sets 'em onto this room."

Gran'ma Bolton came back last week. Tim went clear to Buffalo and back, before he went to hire Lizzie North, who was sort of living on Aunt Becky, to go over and stay at the new house, and do the work, because he said his mother was getting along in years where she ought not to work much, and Tim was sure to be good company for her, too, when he was off about his work.

When the stage came in last Wednesday and Major Watts fetched his horses up with a short turn and a flourish of his lines in front of the new house, all the folks were there over there or standing in the doors looking out, for when Tim went away he said he would be back with his mother that day.

Sure enough, there he was and there was Gran'ma Bolton, just as bright and happy as a good man's good mother can be. Everybody crowded up around her, and the women all kissed her and told her she was looking ten years younger (so she was) and the men sort of sidled ashamed-like toward the edges of the crowd and said, "That's so every thing they heard the women say."

"Come on, mother," said Tim; "I guess they've got dinner ready for us."

"Yes," said Lizzie North, who had run over beforehand, wiping her hands on her apron, and down her apron sleeves as she went; "all the old ready and waiting." Half the women of the village had had a hand in making it ready.

As Gran'ma turned toward home she saw the new house.

"Why, Timothy, what is that?" she asked as if it frightened her.

"That's your new house, mother," he replied.

The men and women all tried to get around in front where they could see her.

"Oh, Timothy!" she said, and there she stood stock still and looked at it. She couldn't speak another word. "Oh, Timothy!" that was all, and her eyes were moist and shiny, and a big round tear just bubbled out and ran down her cheek. And when she looked at it didn't seem to want to play about her mouth.

"Do you like the looks of it, mother?" asked Tim.

"Yes, my dear boy; it is very beautiful, very—"

"Never mind the buts, mother. It's all paid for, and we can afford it. We might as well spend our money as we go, and get some good out of it. Come along."

Gran'ma Bolton didn't seem to want to move. She just wanted to stand and look at the beautiful new house.

Deacon Bibb's wife nudged Mrs. Watson behind Gran'ma Bolton, and the two looked into each other's eyes as if to say: "Isn't she surprised, though?"

Job Harding, of a little way, said to Daniel Mappin: "Waal, they can't say Tim ain't worth this 'bout right."

After a little they went over to the house. As the rest walked up the front steps Lizzie North whispered something to Mrs. Watson and ran around to the back door right as she could get it.

"So?" said Deacon Bibb's wife. "Your own name on the door, Sary."

Tim reached for the door-knob.

"Sh!" said Mrs. Watson, as she pushed his hand away and gave the bell-cord a half a dozen vigorous turns.

The bell had hardly stopped sounding when the door flew open and Lizzie North stood inside, bowing and curtseying extravagantly, saying to Gran'ma Bolton: "Come right in; make yourself right at home."

Gran'ma stepped inside and looked around and up and down and around again.

"You've come to stay awhile, I guess, ain't you?" said Lizzie. "Well, I'll show you where your room will be while you're here," and gaily she led the way up the wide stairs and into the front room where the oak furniture was all set up, shiny and not a speck upon it. Then Lizzie ran down the back stairs.

While the women, who had all tagged along up-stairs, were helping Gran'ma off with her things, they hardly gave her time to glance at the thing before they called her attention to another.

"Look at a woman that ought to be perfectly happy," said Mrs. Watson, dragging Gran'ma before the tall looking-glass.

"See here!" said young Mrs. Everitt,

bouncing down on the bed and bobbing up again.

"Ain't you ashamed?" said Aunt Becky, as she smoothed out the white counterpane and straightened up a ruffled pillow that had toppled over.

Then they all went down-stairs cackling like a flock of blackbirds, pointing out this thing, pulling Gran'ma around to look at that, and finally they stepped into the dining-room, where Lizzie was standing by the table with a clean white apron on and an emudge of soot across her pretty cheek.

Everybody was as jolly as could be—everybody but Gran'ma Bolton. She looked tired and kind of sad, but she smiled and said it was a great surprise to her and made her very happy.

After dinner Elder Gibson's wife whispered around among the others that they all ought to be going; that Gran'ma was tired and ought to be left alone. So one by one they went away and Lizzie North washed up the dishes while Tim showed his mother all over the house, and told her what all the new-fangled things were for.

The next afternoon when I called to see Gran'ma Bolton she sat in a little old-fashioned rocking-chair that she had brought in from the buggy-room. Tim had gone to the city to order a painting of his father made from an old portrait.

"I like this little chair better than any I ever had," she said. "It seems sort of fit me better. I s'pose it was because I have sat in it so many years and rocked all my babies in it."

There was a sorrow in her heart which I could see shining out at her eyes.

"Isn't the new house beautiful?" she said, "and the furniture?"

"Yes," she replied, and tears came into her eyes.

"What is the matter, Gran'ma?" I asked. "You don't seem to be happy."

"Don't let Timothy know it," she said; "he is so good. He's tried to do every thing for me. He didn't know—that—"

She raised her apron and wiped her eyes.

"Dear boy, he didn't know that this couldn't make me a—happy, so Tim said."

The food burst and she hid her face in her apron.

"I mustn't never let him know," she said, after awhile; "he thought it was going to make me so happy!"

"But you will be used to it pretty soon," I said, "and you will find it more comfortable than the old house. You know you said yourself last fall that the old house was hardly fit to pass another winter in."

"Yes, I know it. It was old and small, but it was home."

She tried to dry her eyes, but the tears would bubble up.

"I can't find nothing in this great house," she went on; "there ain't nothing in the right place. It is all like I was in some strange country where I don't know my language, and I couldn't understand nobody else. This morning I went out to the pasture to see Brindle and Bessy and the colts, and it seemed like even they didn't know me, and I wish I hadn't gone away at all, and there was the old house piled up again the barn, and I couldn't-a-bear to look at them boards—that's all they be now—just boards—and while I stood there calling Brindle, and wondering where her calf could be, Lizzie come down and said Tim's coming home with her."

"Yes, you know you thought you'd better not raise any more calves," I said.

"I know it; it wa'n't Timothy's fault; he did it all for the best, and I could a-stood it better if it hadn't a-been for the old house. Tim's a good boy, but he's got a way of his own. But you won't never say nothing to Timothy about it, will you?"

I promised her that of course Tim should never hear of it, and told her she should be all right in a few days.

"Timothy," she said, and there she stood with her hands on her hips, and she looked at her lost home at my age never get over it. I've just got to stand it; that's all."

She made a brave effort to keep back the tears. I could think of nothing but to speak a word for some time. Then Gran'ma said:

"Right a-top of the pile was the board his pa nailed onto the place by the old kitchen door where Timothy chopped it out to get the kittens that he'd brought home when he was a boy. And there was the very door that had Carl's scratches on it, and the buttry window where I stood kneading bread when I saw Timothy's little brother fall out of the big apple tree—and—"

"mamma! just before he died; and then—"

She could say no more. She buried her face in her little wrinkled hands and the tears squeezed through her fingers and dripped on her lap, as the old house and the old life came back to her.

Down-stairs to tell the caller that Gran'ma was not well enough to be seen that afternoon.

"My!" said the good Mrs. Watson who stood there, "I hope she ain't going to have a real sick spell. She might as well die, it seems to me. I wouldn't it be just awful if she should die just as Tim has got every thing fixed to make her the happiest woman in all Tamarack!"—*Willis B. Hawkins, in Chicago News*.

A Nigger in the Wood-Pile.

Mrs. Yerger (who is reading a newspaper with some interest in politics)—

"I am inclined to think that the meeting of the Car and the German Emperor may result in the seizure of Montenegro."

Colonel Yerger (who is a little deaf, and is thinking about local politics)—

"The bell had hardly stopped sounding when the door flew open and Lizzie North stood inside, bowing and curtseying extravagantly, saying to Gran'ma Bolton: 'Come right in; make yourself right at home.'"

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TALMAGE'S SERMON.

An Interesting Sermon on An Every-Day Subject.

"Flatters That Will Not Stick," or Worldly Philosophers Versus Christ—Dis-solves as Ministers to Trouble, led Spirits.

The following sermon was delivered by Rev. T. W. Talmage at East Hampton, N. Y., where he is spending his summer vacation. His text was:

Miserable comforters are ye all-Job, xvi, 5. The man of us has great many friends, but the loss of his health, or the most unexpected thing that came upon him was the tantalizing talk of those who ought to have sympathized with him. Looking around upon them, and weighing what they had said, he utters the words of his text.

Why did God let sin come into the world? It is a question I often hear discussed, but never satisfactorily answered. God made the world fair and beautiful at the start. If our first parents had not sinned in Eden they might have gone out of that garden and found paradise all around the earth—Europe, Asia, Africa.

And such a garden! There were orchards of fruit, redolent and luscious. I suppose that when God poured out the silver and the golden rivers, he poured out at the same time, the Hudson, and the Susquehanna; the whole earth was very fair and beautiful.

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